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Inman's 2d Career: Tackling Japanese Technology

By ROBERT D. HERSHEY Jr.

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WASHINGTON, March 7 — When Bobby Ray Inman resigned last spring as deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, he said it was because he had lost his "zeal" for bureaucratic infighting after 30 years on the Government payroll.

Six months later, when the Texas-born Admiral Inman abruptly quit as a part-time adviser to the House Intelligence Committee because he had not been consulted about the publication of what he regarded as a partisan study of intelligence activities in Central America, it looked like the final protest of a man who had promised never again to be caught up in the kind of petty rivalries that seem to bloom so readily in Washington.

"There were times," he recalled, "when one could think that the enemy was not the Soviets, the Koreans or the Chinese but the Army, the Air Force, the Marines or the other intelligence agencies."

Admiral Inman, widely esteemed and at last free to pursue the second career he had long contemplated, looked at numerous inviting offers: Academia beckoned as did investment banking and some major construction firms.

Big Business Rivalries

But the 51-year-old Admiral Inman, in his metamorphosis from the very model of an electronic-age Government superspy, has chosen instead to head a new kind of American business enterprise, a company founded on the belief that intense competitors like Honeywell, Control Data and Sperry can be persuaded to work together to meet the technological challenge of Japan.

Some think it can't be done, that the rivalries of Government will pale in comparison to those of big business when the gloves come off and it's time for the individual partners to contribute jointly to an effort that may help a competitor make millions.

The venture is called the Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corporation, or M.C.C., a company formed last year by 10 high-tech-

nology companies galvanized by the way the Japanese have mobilized to challenge America's traditional supremacy in areas such as semiconductors and computers. There is a major effort in Japan to build a computer that is far faster than anything on American drawing boards and that would make major strides in "artificial" intelligence simulating the human brain.

"Unless you stay ahead," said Erich Bloch, chairman of the Semiconductor Research Cooperative, an I.B.M.-inspired effort that is the only United States project resembling M.C.C., "you're going to lose the ball game."

M.C.C. is the brainchild of William C. Norris, the innovative chairman of the Minneapolis-based Control Data Corporation, an archrival of I.B.M. and a specialist in very large computers. Admiral Inman said Mr. Norris established M.C.C. after visiting Japan two years ago and concluding that American business had to do something out of the ordinary to meet the Japanese challenge.

Sensitive Work in Government

In going to work for the new corporation, Admiral Inman said he was worried from the outset about special problems he would face, including those raised by his many years of sensitive work in Government. His public career was climaxed by a four-year stint as head of the National Security Agency, a worldwide cryptographic and eavesdropping operation employing tens of thousands, but so secret that for many years its existence was not officially acknowledged. At the N.S.A. Admiral Inman had access to more raw intelligence than anyone in Washington.

Unlike many former Government officials and military officers, Admiral Inman did not consider any of the many offers that would have required contact with former associates. "I simply decided I was not going to go back and deal with people in a business way who were in any way indebted to me for their promotions," he said.

Moreover, M.C.C. will not seek Government contracts, although it will ac-

cept grants if the Government wants to accelerate work in some promising area of research.

"Contracts carry strings," said Admiral Inman. "Grants by and large do not."

Then there was the hazard of the antitrust laws, which are designed to prevent the price-fixing and market-sharing arrangements that can occur when competitors meet in private. Admiral Inman, who eventually hired his own antitrust lawyer, concluded that the venture would not subject him and other participants to criminal antitrust violations and that they would simply have to take their chances with the more worrisome private suits that could result in fines for triple damages.

The Justice Department, which had been told about M.C.C., did not object in principle to its formation, but said it would monitor the specific research projects in the company's four areas of interest — advanced computer design, computer software technology, integrated circuit packaging and CAD-CAM, or computer-assisted design, computer-assisted manufacture.

Each of the dozen or more M.C.C. partners contributes only \$150,000 in capital, the main expense being the several million dollars that will be needed for the minimum commitment — participation in one major project for at least three years.

A Matter of Equal Access

Although it will hold patents and license production, M.C.C. will market no products of its own. This will be left to the companies sponsoring that particular research and it's here that Admiral Inman faces one of his most delicate tasks — making sure that sponsors enjoy equal access to the rewards.

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DEA used CIA personnel to "help us prepare a better product." In fact, "DEA produces both strategic and tactical/operational intelligence. Of the total strategic product approximately 25 percent is provided by the CIA."³² And, as noted above, the DEA also provided agents to Oliver North's NSC covert actions.

Conclusion

The large increases in drug intelligence activities by the Reagan administration are particularly frightening, given the unfolding Iran/contra revelations of illegal domestic political activities. The very agencies included in the war on drugs—the FBI, the DEA, and the CIA—are also charged with serious violations of U.S. laws, some related to drug trafficking. The political uses of a "drug war" were summed up back in 1975 by Dr. Louis "Jolly" West, who headed covert experiments with LSD and other mind control methods for the CIA:

The role of drugs in the exercise of political control is also coming under increasing discussion. Control can be imposed either through prohibition or supply. The total or partial prohibition of drugs gives government considerable leverage for other types of control. An example would be the selective application of drug laws...against selected components of the population, such as members of certain minority groups or political organizations.³³

32. Hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, J. 98-8, February 23, 1983.

33. R. K. Siegal and L. J. West, eds., *Hallucinations: Behavior, Experience, and Theory* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975).

creased greatly over the past several years. The reorganization of the intelligence community is the crucial feature of this increase. In 1981, the DEA and the FBI were given joint jurisdiction over drug enforcement. Over the next few years, as the number of joint cases escalated, related electronic surveillance increased by almost 300 percent. By 1984, DEA intelligence exchange agreements had been reached with all 50 state police forces to give them access to data culled by the El Paso Intelligence Center, which processes hundreds of thousands of requests annually.²⁹

Use of agents and informants has also expanded. Attorney General Edwin Meese proposed that employers hire agents to spy on workers in parking lots, locker rooms, and even nearby bars; his recommendations were based on the advice of Peter Bensinger.³⁰ Hopefully, Meese will not try to implement other more extreme practices accepted by Bensinger when he headed the DEA. Referring to torture in Mexico by the Mexican Federal Judicial Police, Bensinger is quoted as saying that U.S. DEA officials "leave immediately when the torture begins," and then get their answers after the Mexican police are finished with the "interrogation."³¹

The DEA reorganization also dictated increased cooperation with other intelligence agencies. All field offices of the FBI and DEA were ordered in 1982 by then Attorney General William French Smith to set up liaison agents with each other. FBI narcotics investigations increased from 100 to 1,000. The

29. Hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, J. 99-9, March 19, 1985, p. 22.

30. *New York Times*, October 31, 1986.

31. Thomas Plate and Andrea Darvi, *Secret Police* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), p. 17.

Recommended Reading

A fine and comprehensive history of the CIA's covert operations around the world has recently been published. *The CIA, A Forgotten History: U.S. Global Interventions Since World War 2*, by William Blum, describes and analyzes American interventions in more than 50 countries, from China in the 1940s to Nicaragua in the 1980s, each account pieced together from many sources, thoroughly documented and indexed.

This 428-page paperback is available from Humanities Press International, 171 First Avenue, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716 (phone orders: 800-221-3845), for \$15.00. We recommend it to our readers.

Dirty Tricks Database

For those of you who use computers, an invaluable database is available. It comprises an index of date and page citations to appearances of the names of more than 20,000 individuals and organizations in hundreds of books and thousands of newspaper and magazine clippings, all dealing with the CIA, the FBI, and U.S. government oppression in general. It works with hard disk or dual floppy machines, MS-DOS or CP/M. It is available for \$35.00 (or write for details) from Microociates, P.O. Box 3569, Arlington, VA 22205.